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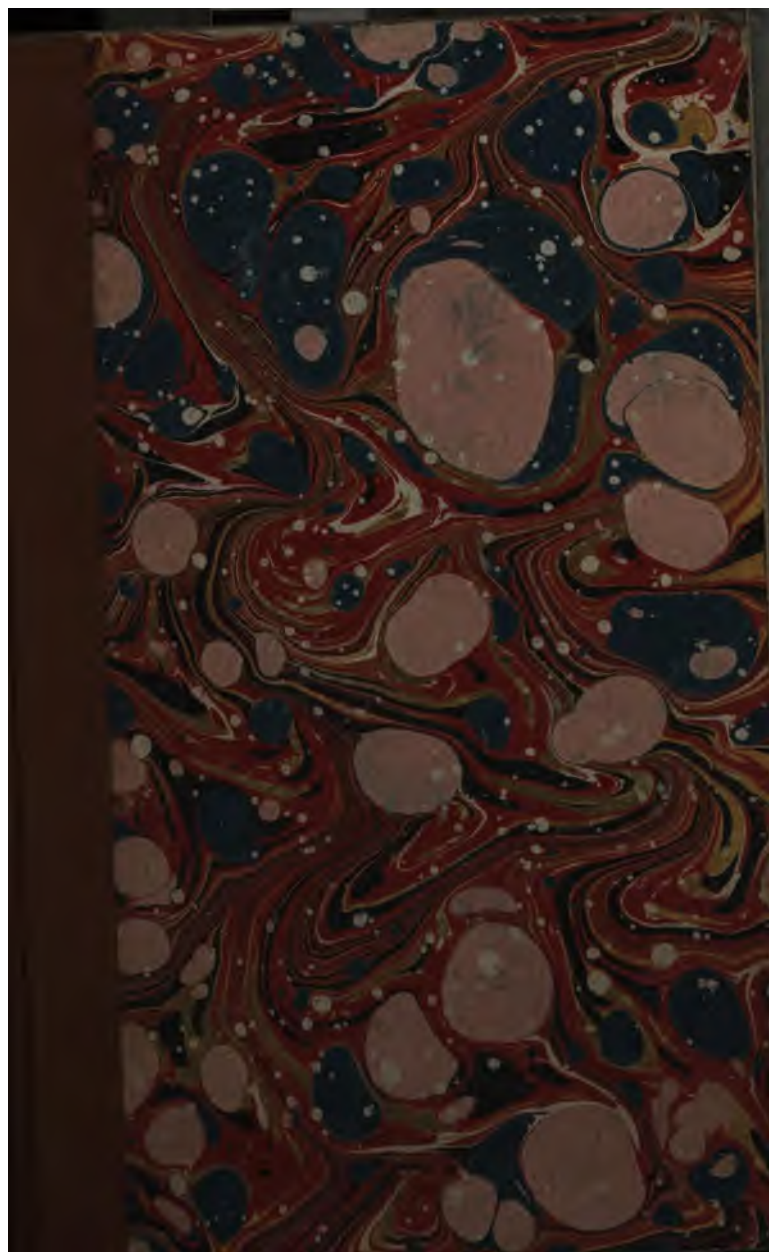
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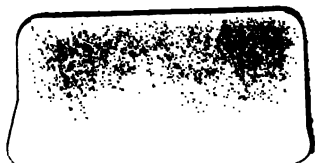
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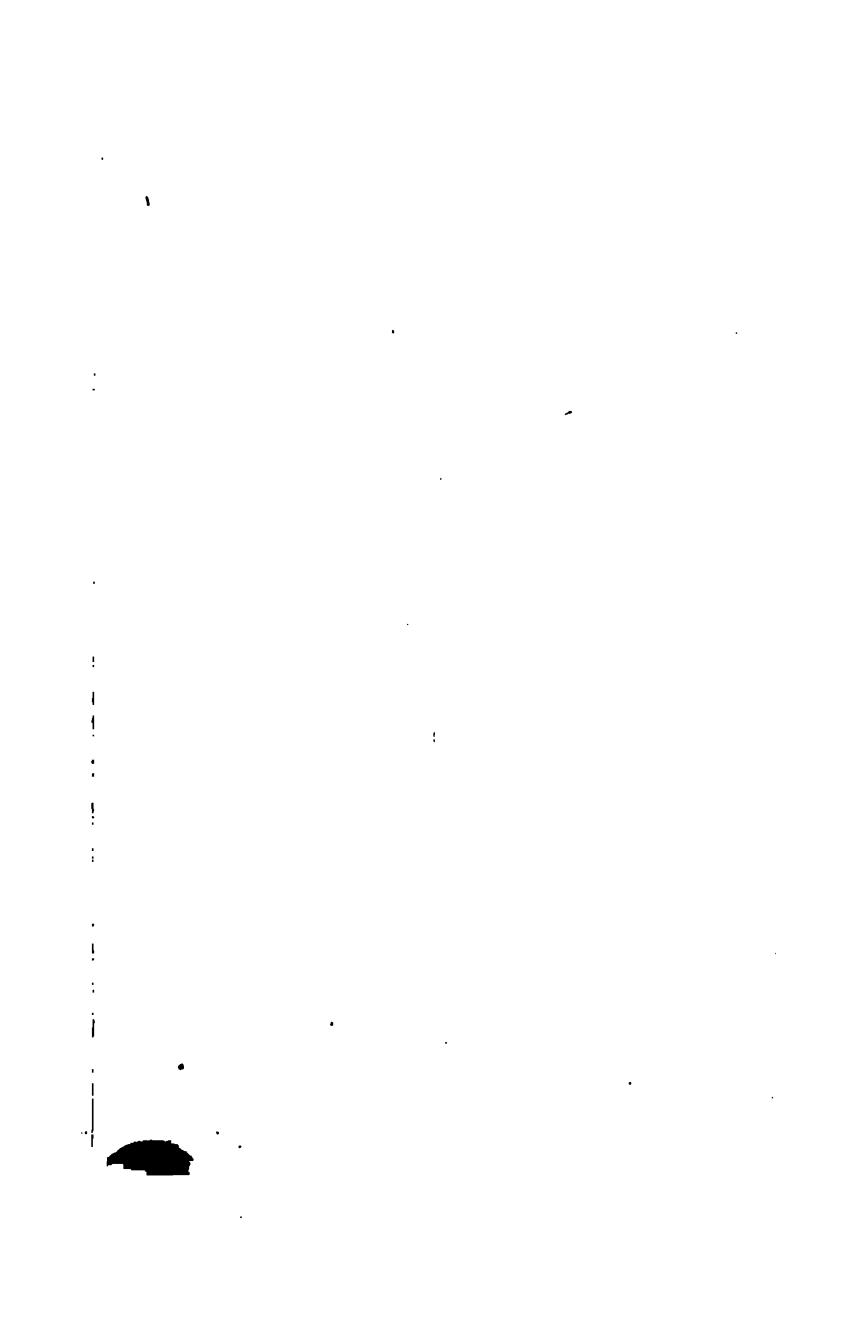
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48. 1763.







MODERN LIFE.

LONDON:
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MODERN LIFE,

A Poem.

BY

ALFRED DIXON TOOVEY



A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

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1848.



MODERN LIFE.

PART I.

THE sage's theme, the poet's deathless song —
Man when called forth in converse with the throng —
The soul's bright gleams — the passion and the strife,
The burning, quenchless poetry of life —
Life's varied scene, and hope's fond, fitful ray —
And musing mortals dreaming life away.

Not far from London is a fertile spot,
Which in man's vast *improvements* seems forgot:
There may we see the verdant vilage green;
And there the glassy stream may still be seen;
The modest church with ivy covered round,
And antique tomb-stones in the burial-ground:
There may we listen to the bleating fold,
Trace the rude carving — " Traveller, behold !"
A lesson we from every stone may learn,
The truth as pure as that on " storied urn."

Hard by the church the pastor's dwelling stands;
His house but poor; of small extent his lands:
(Unlike to those proud mansions of the great
Where higher shepherds pass their days in state):
Yet had the Vicar never wished for more;
He prayed to Heaven, and Heaven had bless'd his store
Oft, when he viewed the dwellings of the great,
He felt more thankful for his humble state;
And when he entered in the lowly cot,
And saw there happiness was oft the lot,
He was content with every blessing given;
And troubles only smoothed his path to Heaven.
And thus, for ever happy and content,
For two-score years his life had here been spent;
His precepts taught but what his actions showed,
And with a love of good his bosom glowed,

For two-score years—what changes had he seen!
Those young, now tottering o'er the village green;
Those, who as infants he remembered well,
Now to their children bygone tales would tell;
And those who once his harmless mirth would share,
Now rested in the grave; their souls flown—Where?

The vicar, Mordaunt, passed his life in peace;
Nor as his age crept on did joys decrease:
A tender wife soothed his declining years;
A happy family at his board appears.
O! 'tis a blessed sight to find the one
We loved in youth, and sought and wooed and won—
When youthful passion sets the blood in flame,
To find this one in age can love the same:

The passion gone, a holier feeling shows,
More like to that with which an angel glows.
And thus it is we greater joy receive
From Sol's pure rays at the approach of eve:
The mid-day dazzles; but the setting light
Is far more welcome to our bounded sight.
And love, indeed, is blessed if it last,
To soothe the present, whisper of the past;
Point to the future, and with hope serene
Catch some faint glory of the world unseen.

So with the Pastor's wife: in youth she loved,
And in her age its truthfulness had proved.
Thus, thankful, they their race on earth had run;
Their prayer in every state — "God's will be done!"
Blest with two sons, and with those earthly joys
Which age ne'er weakens and no time destroys.

Richard, the elder, had seen thirty years:
The stamp of manhood on his brow appears;
An open countenance, a candid smile,
A bearing frank, devoid of art or guile;
Fond of his books, to learning much inclined,
He little studied learning through mankind;
He ne'er unheeded passed the house of woe,
Glad if relief or pity he could show;
Yet did he long to pass his days in peace,
And where his life begun would have it cease,
Near to the village church he long had loved,
Or at a fire-side whence he seldom roved.
Without ambition, he shunn'd all excess,
Nor cared for wealth, nor pined he at distress.

Not few his talents, and not mean his mind,
Yet to a narrow sphere their aim confined.
And thus he passed his life, as only those
Who ever have in view how soon 't will close,
And all the transient joys of time shall be
Forgotten in one vast eternity:

Edward, the younger, was of different kind;
With heart as tender, yet self-willed his mind.
His face revealed the sternness of the soul,
The haughty spirit which ne'er brooked control:
And on his brow men tried to trace, in vain,
His thoughts, his motives; yet they looked again.
E'en in his childhood did his parents mark
What in his eyes seemed like to passion's spark.
And what had Edward's youth been but the glow
Of feelings stronger than his age dared show?
Yet, 'mid ambition and youth's fiery zeal,
A moistened eye oft told that he could feel:
And often he, with faltering tongue, would bless
The needy soul, and comfort his distress.
Manhood was reached; and with his manhood came
A will determined, but his heart the same.
Two passions now o'er every thought preside,
Swayed like a boat with adverse wind and tide:
The one — ambition, cankering his soul;
A fonder passion next pervades the whole.
His heart though proud, he loved the paltry fame,
The point of envy and the hero's name:
He loved to hear the whisper of applause;
For this forgetful of th' Eternal Cause.
Thus with the man who leaves the fertile plain,
The towering summit of some mount to gain:

Aspiring thoughts will often blind his eyes,
His way is lost—he famishes and dies.

The Vicar had a brother in his youth,
Who married — died — confided to the truth
And watchful care of such a generous heart,
The last sole relic of his dearer part;
And little Mary, ere she had been taught
The name of parent, to that roof was brought;
And learned to lisp the name of God in prayer;
And, while she knelt, believed her parents — there.

Years had flown by; and she had reached the time
When youthful bloom is mostly in its prime;
When the gay laughter and the joyous mirth
Are left for thoughts now only in their birth;
When time has mellowed with its softening light
The joyous feelings and the young delight.
At that pure age, when blushes o'er the cheek
Feelings more deep than childish joys bespeak;
The faltering accent and the half-checked sigh,
The step more timid, though 'tis scarce known why:
But seventeen summers had bloomed o'er her head,
And round her form their radiance had shed:—
Yet she was fair as those whose fabled love
Lost angels their bright blissful homes above;
Dear — as remembrance to the broken-hearted,
Whose love remains when from the loved one parted;
Pure — as the drop which falls from Beauty's eye,
And claims the heart-felt tribute of a sigh;
Soft — as the memory of childhood's joy;
Bright — as those hopes which time can ne'er destroy.

It is not form, nor is it eyes nor face
That gives to woman loveliness and grace;
'Tis not the colour of the skin or hair;
'Tis not that one is dark, the other fair;
It is the mind must "harmonise the whole,"
The face must be reflected from the soul:
Still shone that soul each varying aspect through,
Like bright stars mirrored in the waters blue.

Mary would scarcely to herself confess,
That of the brothers one she thought of less.
Richard had ever been a brother kind,
Nor to his virtues had her heart been blind;
But mark the reddening flush when Edward came,
The heart's pure glow, and not the blush of shame;
Perchance that hand which trembled in his own
Revealed to him he did not love alone.
Nor was it strange: for when an infant, she
Was always happy on her playmate's knee;
As grew their love and onward rolled their years,
Each shared the other's joys, each dried the other's tears.

Still all things change, and this once happy home
Was now a house of mourning and of gloom;
The joyous step was now the noiseless tread,
And all were weeping round the Pastor's bed:
It may be death; and that dark silent room
Would seem itself to antedate the tomb.
The Vicar was contented and resigned,
Whilst dreams of glory flitted o'er his mind.
Bright are the thoughts, when from the field of fame
The ardent spirit comes with conqueror's name:

Dear is that joy when, after years of strife,
We clasp our all of happiness in life:
This may be bliss; but yet the panting soul
Feels more—much more—when hastening to its goal;
The hope, the trust, the rapture and the dread,
Ere Hades opes its portals for the dead—
Yet hush: he speaks!—"I feel my strength decay,
And hour by hour I seem to waste away;
Soon, soon—nay, weep not—will my spirit flee,
And live—O where?—in immortality.

"But yet, before I go, my children dear,
To my soul hearken, and my words revere.
Yet first to you, who with a watchful care,
Each sorrow soothed, and every ill would share:
When I am gone, and o'er my mortal part
The green sod flourishes, then nerve your heart:
Do not as they, who without hope may sorrow;
To-day we die, yet shall we rise to-morrow.
Richard, to you is given the path I long have trod;
O ne'er neglect to feed the flock of God.
I do not doubt you; for the path of sin
Your soul would harrow ere you walked therein.
But Edward, you too oft have longed to rove,
For what?—The might of intellect to prove.
O check, I pray you, this presumptuous thought;
Fly to the cross of Jesus—there be taught
The mind must be subservient to the soul;
Presumptuous man must bow to God's control.

"Mary, in you I long have joyed to see
A heart as constant as a spirit free;

And thy young soul uncloyed by earthly joys,
That fond illusion which the grave destroys.
Can'st thou not tell, tho' joys to all are given,
Who most appreciates the gifts of heaven?
Is it the restless soul that pants for fame,
And tastes of misery with a hero's name;
Perhaps, like the lark, up-rising to the sky,
Sudden he falls, though he had risen high.
Is it the sordid soul who loves his hoard,
Or he who lavishes at Pleasure's board;
Ah, no! but is not he supremely blest,
Whose heart is peace, whose passions are at rest;
Who calmly glides along this path of strife,
And sinks to rest—to wake—to light and life?"

The Vicar paused: he looked around, and now
There seem'd a sudden lightning o'er his brow;*
As though his spirit, in that gleam proclaimed
His was a "hope that maketh not ashamed."
T'was like the sun, the only good to bless
Some trackless path of a wide wilderness,
Though all would else be cheerless, still that light
Dispels the gloom and makes the desert bright;
It seemed for earth too bright, too pure, too fair—
A glimpse of what the soul might after share:
Yet, what of this? It came, and it is past:
Each heart-struck mourner felt that sigh his last.

* How oft, when men are at the point of death
Have they been merry? which their keepers call
A lightning before death——.

Shakspeare. Romeo and Juliet.

And he was gone: and many a tearful eye
Wept that he left them for his kindred sky.
And he was gone: his soul was winged above,
To the bright realms of everlasting love.

I will not dwell upon that week of woe,
Which there, at least, had not been heartless show :
I will not pause upon those days of dread,
Which passed before the burial of the dead.
Yet now the morn appears, when every tongue
Is heard in whispers: now the church-bells rung,
Not merry peals, but like a solemn dirge,
With sound more doleful than the midnight surge;
For though the ocean roars, the billows roll,
The lightning flashes, thunder shakes the soul,
They do not chill us like that stillness, when
We to the grave consign our fellow-men.
'Tis well it does not last: for o'er the soul,
Such wintry moments soon must cease to roll,*
Or the sad mourner would partake the lot
Of one so ardent loved, and scarce with death forgot.

Two months had passed: nor had they passed in vain;
For every heart lost somewhat of its pain.
Now could they enter in that darksome room,
And even there forget awhile the tomb:
There was the seat where he had late been placed,
And there "the study" he so oft had graced;

* "But in that moment o'er his soul
Winters of memory seemed to roll."

Byron's Giaour.

Yet these were passed unheeded by: the talk
Not always of him in his favorite walk.
Yet deem them not ungrateful: for the mind
Ponders but little on that theme—mankind:
Nor was it strange that they should seek relief,
When others seek it from a lesser grief.

Now Spring unfolds her beauties to the sight,
And vernal glories give the sense delight:
Now do the fields more verdant looks assume,
And man and nature gladden with the bloom.
It was that hour when in the Western sky,
The sun was setting with a reddening dye:
It was the hour, when music, from the throats
Of birds mellifluous, glides in liquid notes;
When most is tempered the heart's stubborn steel,
And man, if ever, for mankind will feel.

Oh! after all the hardships of the day,
If passed in labour, not in proud array,
Is it not pleasant, at the hour of eve,
To smile with man, or e'en with man to grieve;
To hold sweet converse with our fellow kind,
While mutual sympathy expands the mind?
Ah, yes! and did these moments longer last,
In which we ponder o'er the day that's past,
Man might forego some one ambitious aim,
And hearts now cruel might their natures tame.

But yet these peaceful moments may be cloyed
By those we love not and th' effect destroyed:
By Mordaunt's family, not unfelt the gloom,
That Stranger's presence cast around the room;

And all the joy they felt before was now
Chilled by the withering aspect of that brow.
A man he was of two-score years or more,
Yet coming times had cast their shades before;
He seemed as though, were that indeed his age,
His life had halted at each foregone stage:
But age will ne'er appal us—you might trace
Somewhat of evil lurking in that face:
Perchance that sneering lip, that downcast brow,
Told tales of deeds he had not dared avow:
Yet wherefore here? He seems not one to roam,
Though he may gladden to make sad a home.

“You then were Mordaunt’s wife?” the stranger said;
The widow murmured, “Yes”; and bent her head.
Not Scandal’s tongue, while thus her eyes o’erflow,
Could tax her with the “mockery of woe.”
“I knew him,” said Howard (such the Stranger’s name);
“Long did he seek my wayward youth to tame.
For years I have not seen him; and my time
Has since been spent in India’s sultry clime:
And now, returned to this forgotten isle,
I find no welcome and I meet no smile.
Yet have I that which though ’tis oft called dross,
Our virtues trumpet, and o’er crimes will gloss.
’Tis gold: I started a successful scheme;
And when ’twas won, it seemed an idle dream.
I ne’er was one to value woman’s smile,
E’en though the sunny daughters of this isle;
Still less in Ind: yet did I long for one
Who, of my blood, could not a father shun;
On whom to lavish all my wealth and care;
And, could I pray, for whom should be my prayer

And then I married, and a son up-grew:
With him came feelings I before ne'er knew.
The mother died; nor could we smooth her pillow,
For o'er her body rolled the mighty billow.
And then, of course, the sounds of discontent
Were heard around: each gave his feelings vent;
Some were content to sneer at, or deride,
While others — 'Lo the murderer of his bride.'

"Yet were these sounds soon hushed; and all again
Once more was peaceful; but then o'er my brain
There came a fearful darkness: reason fled:
When sense returned, I found my son was — dead.
I will not tell you of those days of gloom,
Nor how I walked at midnight round his tomb;
It was that fearful stubbornness of woe,
When the heart chokes, and tears will seldom flow:
'Tis a relief, though snapping the heart's strings,
When from the eyelids scalding sorrow springs.
I tried to pray: but then my heart became
Tortured e'en more at the Almighty's name:
Yet time brought some relief; and then I felt
I worshipped Mammon, though to God I knelt.

"I stayed not there: thus heart-struck and forlorn,
The victim both of flattery and scorn,
I left for England: to this place I came.
By yon church-font was first proclaimed my name;
There is that village-school where I was taught:
Yet, ah! how little good that teaching wrought.
My mind was early warped to sin; and now,
I fear, the mark of Cain is on my brow."

The stranger paused, and cast his eyes around.
"And have you yet from this no respite found?"
Asked Edward Mordaunt: "In this lonely place,
But little is there sorrows to efface."
"Not so," returned the other; "for to live
Where man one sympathetic tear will give,
Perchance produces feelings which renown
Would never bring—absorbs what pleasure ne'er could
drown:

And I have marked in this long tedious tale,
Your sympathy o'er your dislike prevail:
Look in yon maiden's eye; there stands a tear
Which tells me that my woes are pitied here."

"I well remember," said the Vicar's wife,
"The dauntless daring of your early life;
And when your parents oft your freaks have seen
From the bow-window looking o'er the green,
The youthful games you seemed the first to win;
A mischief talked of, you the first to sin;
But they who saw those freaks did not suppose
Their aged eyes without your aid would close;
Yet soon they drifted down the stream of time,
With you forgetful in another clime."

"'Tis but too true. Not then to me were dear
Their smiles of pleasure, and their voice to cheer.
Perhaps e'en now I could not love a home;
But that I hate still more than this to roam.
I left this place against my parents' will:
Lost then the only safeguard against ill."

"There is a better Safeguard e'en than they,"
Said Richard Mordaunt; "One which can ne'er decay.
A firm reliance on that higher Power
Is the sole safeguard o'er each passing hour."

The youthful Vicar kindly pressed his stay,
While Howard talked of leaving day by day.
It was not that they loved him; but there seemed
A spell cast round him like that sometimes dreamed —
A nameless something, a charm undefined,
That mystic offspring of a mighty mind.
We do not love this nature; but it seems
To rule our thoughts by day, and haunts our dreams.
We cannot love them, and we do not hate;
Yet such are oft enwoven with our fate;
Though oft they stand superior to all;
Yet when they sin, like Lucifer's their fall.

In reading, riding, walking, passed each day,
And Howard's gloom seemed partly chased away;
But yet not all, for will not such conceal
Those maddening thoughts which o'er the brain will steal?
And he was one of those who seem most glad
When the heart droops, and most the soul is sad.

On the first morning, Howard sought the ground
Where he had pleasure in his boyhood found,
Or, if not pleasure, where he oft would stroll
To be released from aught that might control.
Once more he gazes on each once-loved spot,
Which until now had been well nigh forgot.
And now, no wonder 'tis the village talk
Of "the dark stranger seen in yonder walk;"

And each one wondered "whence he came; and why
His step so haughty, and so proud his eye."
One would "dislike him"; and another thought
"That his stern brow some evil deed had wrought";
While others said, that "they remembered well
A face like his, but where they could not tell";
And each had somewhat to remark of one
Whom all agreed it would be well to shun.

Next morn he walked again: and then 'twas said,
"He looked like one but mourning for the dead."
Sorrowful, 'tis true; but each one viewed
"That with a Christian's heart he was endued;
His gait was manly, and his look was kind;
A noble person, and still nobler mind:"
And what had wrought this change, and why should they,
Who shunn'd so lately, follow him to day?

The night before he of his wealth had given,
And this the passport to most else, save Heaven.
And they who lately hated that stern brow,
Followed, flattered, seemed to love him *now*.
Some few there were who did not now caress
E'en the *kind* comforter of their distress.
They felt his kindness; but they also knew
He might do this and yet be evil too.
Some few reflected, that the road to fame
Gold often purchased; that a hero's name
Too oft is reached but by the shining ore;
And when that fails his glory is no more.

A week had passed; and now uprose the sun,
And now another Sabbath had begun;

And there at least it seemed to be a day,
When e'en the wicked some respect display.
Yes, all was silent save th' inviting call
Which those church-bells were issuing to all:
There was no "open house," within whose walls
Man wastes his health; nay, more—his soul enthralls:
There was no "palace," sense to overwhelm,
Unheeded, if not sanctioned, by the realm:
No public haunt in which the voice within,
Could quite be deadened by intemperate sin;
And yet men oft will reason, that "they see
No harm in this:" but, mark, *futurity*—
Think of that word, when in these scenes of crime,
And there regard futurity and time.

The rich and poor seem anxious here to share
The same good lesson in the house of prayer:
There is the mean-clad peasant; there we view
The "Squire and household" in their high-backed-pew:
All, all unite to worship Him alone,
Round whom the glories of the Godhead shone.
And now the prayers were over; and the poor
Halted a moment at the chancel door:
Each received something from the stranger's store,
So each one loved him better than before.

Man loves the best from whom he most receives;
The benefactor gone, the suppliant grieves:
But what of they who give?—sometimes, indeed,
It is the harvest but of well-sown seed;
Yet men more oft have with each other vied,
Largely to give, to gratify their pride.

Thus Howard cared not though the beggar die,
Unless the Lazarus at *his* gate should lie.

And how had Edward Mordaunt passed these days;
His name forgotten in the stranger's praise?
How had he felt, whilst thus around was thrown,
The gorgeous mantle cast by wealth alone?
Natures unlike will sometimes love to join,
As base alloy is mixed with purest coin;
But yet more oft we find that men will herd
With those who echo every thought and word:
There was, in Edward Mordaunt, not the same
Unfeeling heart; yet each aspired to fame:
To him unknown th' impiety of pride,
One day to comfort, and the next deride;
By him unknown, that dread, that maddening thrall,
Which overwhelms the sense and deadens all;
But yet he felt a sadness o'er him steal
Which his pride would not for his life reveal.
He ever loved to wander forth and muse,
And from creation draw sublimest truths.
He loved to wander by the gentle streams,
And picture forms seen only in our dreams:
He loved to walk by moonlight o'er the green,
And muse on what he was, and what had been:
His was a nature which desired apart
To scan the deep recesses of the heart.

Nor was that heart corrupt—a misty veil
Obscured its brightness, but could not prevail:

And oft, as morning mists are driven away,
And fogs are banished by the "king of day,"*
So would the better feelings of his heart
Dispel the mist, and make his pride depart.

Edward and Howard had far different ends,
Yet some few views in common made them friends;
Though neither loved the other, yet each felt
That some resemblance in their feelings dwelt:
Each shared the other's long protracted walk,
The way enlivened by familiar talk.
Though oft opinions clash, yet each one found
The other's reason tread upon *his* ground.

* It was one eve when the Sun's setting beams
Shone in bright sparkles on the murmuring streams,
And the sweet sounds which issued from yon vale
Revealed the music of the nightingale:
Edward and Howard had beguiled the hours,
Viewing the ruins of some ancient towers,
That in a neighbouring village might be seen,
Where once 'twas said was bound a captive queen,
Where often afterwards was kept in state
The monarch's darling, and the people's hate;
Yet few men cavill'd, and 'tis surely just
To spare all royal votaries of lust.

From morn till noon, from noon till close of day,
With conversation they beguiled the way;

* But yonder comes the powerful *king of day*,
Rejoicing in the East—

Thompson, Summer.

Nor as they homeward turned felt less inclined
To know the workings of each other's mind.
"To this we all return;" and Mordaunt felt
A sinking soul as on the thought he dwelt.
"Those towers," said he, "which we have been to view,
We less had thought of had they been more new;
Yet now we love the glory that is gone,
The mouldering ruin and the worn-out stone:
On these the mind will dwell, yet what are new
Please us as baubles and like them pass too.
Yet these once mighty monuments of art,
Their glory gone, their ruins will depart;
And all will be ere many years forgot;
Tempests will moulder, and soon time will rot.
What now of mighty Babylon is shown?
No ruins there—almost its place unknown:
Yet some will give their health, their time, to stand
On what they guess is Babylonish land:
And why is it that man can love to gaze
On mouldering relics of departed days;
And even there, where nought around is seen,
Can love to stand for what there may have been?
Is it that man can love to pause on what
All nature tells him is the common lot?
Is it that he can draw from this the thought
That he though mighty now will soon be nought?
His glory gone, his very being dead;
His body rotting and his spirit fled.

"Do we for this love on such scenes to pause?"
Asked Edward Mordaunt.

"I know not the cause,

But why such thoughts as these; and wherefore draw
Such strong conclusions from but Nature's law?
From dust we came; at least it so is said:
And dust we may be, mingling with the dead:
 Man follows man, like forms in Banquo's glass;
 Still thus as shades we come—like visions pass.
 Yet what of this? While living we should live,
 And care but little what to-morrow give,
We cannot alter: wherefore tax our brain?
We know no pleasure is produced by pain.

“I oft have wondered much, that with a mind
Which pants for fame, you can have fame resigned.
Since with you, I have marked the sudden glow,
Which tells your blood is used to quickly flow:
I oft have watched your keen inquiring soul,
And thought that little you could brook controul.
You might have won perhaps a noble name,
And in the path of honour sought for fame:
Forgive me, if my friendship has transgressed,
You know your motives and your actions best.”

“Is it not best to check too strong desires?”

“No: 'tis but fuel added to the fires:
Though meek-eyed Pity hover o'er thy hearth
And Love and Friendship strew with flowers thy path,
Kept in seclusion, soon the day may come,
Satiety may make you loathe a home:
But had you seen the world and known its cares,
Its petty evils and its deeper snares,

You soon had felt that little else could give
More joys than this: for this you then might live.
But has this place for ever been your home,
And have you ne'er indulged a wish to roam?"

[passed,

"My childhood," said Mordaunt, "at this place was
And every comfort was around it cast.
I reached seventeen: then first I felt the shame
Of life unmindful of youth's idol—Fame.
Then first I wished through the wide world to rove
To seek renown e'en though I banished love.
With much entreaty I obtained consent,
And left this place. To Oxford's towers I went.
My brother went before me; and he told
What I should feel and what I might behold;
Yet he was patient, could forgive the sneer
Which taught my soul to hate—and rankles here."

"And what was that?" asked Howard; "I have guessed
There was a somewhat you had not expressed."

"My father was too poor to send me there,
With aught save what was needful, and his prayer.
I entered college; but too soon I found
My poverty despised, and wealth renowned:
A *Servitor*, 'twas thought, no insult feels;
Yet time may probe the wound, but seldom heals.
I had been there a month; yet, ere that, knew
The source from whence renown at College grew:
'Twas station—interest—wealth—and these at once
Make him a marvel who were else a dunce;

Yet was I glad, that, in the public *school*.
'My Lord' had answered questions like a fool.
The titter which was hard to be suppressed
When his young 'lordship' had too silly guessed;
Yet when he leaves this place and walks the streets,
His hand is grasped and every menial greets,
While with a *friend* parading through the town,
He boasts of wealth, and interest with the crown :
And few men guessed, as strutting he would pass,
That much-sought puppet was the college ass.

"It boots not to relate the insult now,
Nor tell what branded 'shame' upon this brow;
Marked youth's smooth front with furrowed lines of care
When fools may trace th' inglorious record there;
I will not pause to tell thee of the wrong,
My cause, alas! was weak, for wealth is strong—
'Twas quickly proved that I had first rebelled:
'My Lord' was mildly cautioned—I expelled.

"I soon left Oxford: to my home I came;
My spirits broken, overwhelmed with shame.
My father kindly met me; but too sad
That smile—that look—which late had made me glad.
Ere long he died: again I pant for fame,
And hope to banish what men call my shame."

"Mordaunt, my hopes, once fevered as your own,
Have been allayed; but yet the world has shown
That quiet brings not ever with it peace,
Nor in the busy world do comforts cease.

Do college quarrels give a branded name?
Ah! would that I had known no greater shame!
Then wherefore waste your life in scenes like these,
Which, awhile pleasant, soon will fail to please?
Your talents soon your wishes will attain;
Climb but the steep, the pinnacle to gain.
Here have I found that love may grow with age,
That here no time blots friendship from life's page.
Think not I am ungrateful: dost not know
One goodly flower on evil stem may grow?
'Tis in the rugged earth we find the mine;
And costly diamonds 'neath the surface shine,
I am not evil *all*; but will you come
To share at least awhile an outcast's home?
I would not have you live in listless ease;
And little else are cares—are joys like these.
In London man may study more mankind;
And this the noblest study for the mind."

"Yet is this true," asked Edward; "and do not
Such pleasures ripen but what time would rot?
Methought, a week ago, you wished to live,
Where man one sympathetic tear would give?
You cared not for the place; but thought that here
Was peace and quiet"——

"True; it did appear
That I could live in peace, nor care to rove;
But novelty is still my only love.
I ever loved the waves' tumultuous roll—
God's thunder still was music to my soul.

Nor could I live with sunbeams o'er me showered,
If no skies darkened and no tempests lowered.
Nay; I have roved too long to care for rest:
The turmoils of the world still suit me best.
I soon must leave; I do not wish to part,
For kindness will plant interest in the heart.
My wealth and power would place you in a sphere
Where talents shine: they are unnoticed here."

"I thank you," said Mordaunt; "but I will not be
Indebted to another, though 'tis thee;
I ne'er will be by other's bounty fed;
Flatter and fawn to earn my daily bread.
O no! I here will live and here may die,
And know no change except futurity."

"No change! — the universe itself is change—
And changing creatures God's creation range,
Yon shining worlds that in their orbits move—
And man, weak man, inconstant in his love—
The fragile bark still veering in her course,
And empires rocking with an earthquake force:
Think ye then, Mordaunt, that your life will glide
With scarce a ripple by this valley's side.
It is not so; for in those placid streams,
Which look so silvery in the moonlight beams,
Cast but a pebble: see the circle spread—
Repose is gone—the glassy beauty fled.
And so with you—awhile in quiet here,
You dream no ill, no danger can be near:
Let but a pebble in this stream be cast,
Its widening circle will for ever last.

It is not quiet—it is not repose—
Which can ensure that so your life will close:
Yet, if it did, you, Mordaunt, are not one
For listless ease a life of cares to shun.
In London, honour, power, wealth, and fame,
Will soon succeed to what you miscall shame.
Yet think it not a debt: have I not here
Had your kind counsels and your voice to cheer?
Or, if you will not in my comforts share,
Your own promotion there shall be your care.
Yet see your home at hand: now ponder well;
To-morrow morn your resolution tell.”

And what thought Mordaunt, when he sought his bed?
“ Yes; here, at least, in peace I lay my head.
Yes, here, at least, my friends are by my side.”
And then a tear dropt from that heart of pride;
And then each precept that his father taught,
Before his soul, with warning voice, was brought.
“ Yet how,” thought he, “ blot out my dire disgrace;
If actions do not, time cannot efface?
My gentle cousin Mary, who is dear
As is the life-blood which is throbbing here;
For you, for all, I’ll seek the path of fame,
And future deeds shall quite efface my shame.”

Another week had passed: it was the eve
Before the day when Mordaunt was to leave.
Each long-loved face now seems to him more dear,
That the dread day of parting is so near.
Each thing has being now to Edward’s eyes,
For that his home, and there his Paradise.

And so it was: though our first parents trod
The garden planted by the hand of God;
Though every good by Nature there was given,
And Nature's gifts breathed incense back to Heaven;
For this they might regret the judgment passed,
That they from such an Eden should be cast.
But, Oh! what more than anguish 'twas to think,
There flows the stream of which they used to drink,
There are the paths through which they once had roved,
And there the bower where they once had loved.
Association gave the charm to this,
Or even Eden had lost half its bliss.

By Edward every path was traversed o'er,
As though he never should behold it more;
His constant dog, who ne'er from him had roved,
He felt now more than ever that he loved.
The saddened smile man's misery revealing,
E'en when he thinks his anguish he's concealing
(It is a smile which, more than tears, distresses;
It is a sorrow which the soul possesses);
That doubtful misery, that uncertain gloom,
Which from the youthful cheek will steal the bloom:
Unlike the rosy tint of health and gladness,
The smile is but the hectic flush of sadness.
Ah! who can paint those speaking looks, that tell
Man's grief at parting where he loves too well?
Yet when in stubborn hearts these feelings rise,
And the soul's gushing scarce o'erflows the eyes;
When the heart burns, but will not breathe a sigh,
And sorrow's drop is glistening in the eye,

Grief still will gnaw, though we its cause conceal:
Man oft feels most when least he seems to feel.

But soon was passed to them that eve of grief,
And quickly each in slumber sought relief;
Yet ere they went, they felt that one so dear
Claimed the sad parting tribute of a tear.
Oh! few can tell, how dear to Edward's eye,
Was Mary's look of love, and parting sigh—
The brother's caution, and the mother's care—
And then the breathings of united prayer.

The morn arrived — what anguish 'twas to part,
To break the chain that linked each loving heart!
Bright shone the sun — to-morrow he will rise,
Yet they shall hail him under adverse skies.

PART II.

CAN man thy fame — thy power — thy deeds rehearse,
Thou mighty atom of the universe?
Thou speck in matter, judged by form alone,
Thou hadst not glorious amongst empires shone—
'Tis not thy form would make thy name revered,
Thy favour sued for, and thine anger feared ;

For of the universe small space thou art,
A petty sparkle, which scarce forms a part—
London, thou world-controlling city, when I gaze
On what thou art, and know thy former days;
When I reflect that in this spot there stood,
In native grandeur, a wild trackless wood;
When I remember, here the incense rose,
That Pagan gods might crush the Briton's foes,
That in those streets which we so oft have trod,
Men sacrificed to idols, not to God,
I wonder more that thou shouldst empires guide,
O'er distant lands thy senate should preside.
Thy name is known wherever man may roam,
And far-off climes our empire—this our home.
Great heaven has wrought this change: the mighty plan
Were too amazing for the mind of man;
And golden showers has God vouchsafed to pour
On this once barren but now favoured shore.

Imperial London, hail! thy very name
Inspires mankind with love of wealth and fame.
Majestic Thames! glide prosperous as thou art
And still may England boast of Europe's mart.

'Twas in that part where the commercial din
Is somewhat deadened—where pride, pomp, and sin,
Swell the fond breasts of those who wealth have gained;
Their aim to lavish what they have obtained.

Mordaunt sat musing in a gorgeous room;
Nor outward splendour could dispel his gloom:
He had been there a week; and Howard still
Enhanced each pleasure, lessened every ill.

Through Howard's interest he obtained a place
(The name alone was surety 'gainst disgrace):
Employment was but nominal; and he
Received his salary while his time was free;
And what he guessed, with human foresight dim,
A busy world, was otherwise to him.

"Is this ambition's end?" asked Mordaunt—while
His unschooled features wore a saddened smile:
"Is it the only aim of life—to live,
And know not, care not, what to-morrow give?
Canst thou suppose it is my sole desire
To live like this, nor food for love or ire?"

"Come then," said Howard, "let us seek some place
Where novelty will soon thy gloom efface:
In this, your care, your thoughts, you soon may drown,
Nor fear the sceptic's sneer, the bigot's frown.
Life may be viewed afar, as we may gaze
Through history's page on deeds of bygone days;
Or as the man who from a summit looks
On sportive fishes in the distant brooks:
The object dimly seen—he cannot view
Distinctly from that height their kind or hue.
Thus, Mordaunt, you have hitherto seen life:
Think not you know it while aloof from strife;
Look *into* man—partake each joy, each care:
Then learn his nature while you shun the snare.
You need not, Mordaunt, mixing with mankind,
Let the world's baseness enter in your mind;
You need not drink so deep of pleasure's well,
That copious draughts should better thoughts expel;

As that is poison if we drink too deep,
Which, if but tasted, lulls us into sleep."

"We differ here," said Mordaunt, "for I think
We should be better did we never drink:
If once we sip, we long to sip again;
And when once tasted, our resolves are vain:
The cup is emptied to the dregs — too late
We find each draught has hurried on our fate.
Oh no, I do not long to take my fill
Of joys like these, and then be restless still.
Perhaps, e'en worse — my hopes may then retire,
My heart be vacant, and my brain on fire;
The poisoned waters rushing on my soul,
Despair or madness would pervade the whole;
And then, oh then, 'twould be too late to tell
What dreadful weight pulled down my soul to hell."

"You speak too strongly here"—

"It may be so

Yet I would not the evils of it know.
I do not fear the tasting pain and grief;
An active life to me would be relief:
Yet, while I travel in the busy world,
I would not be in Pleasure's vortex whirled.
Oh would that heaven would grant unto my mind
The praise — the admiration of mankind!"

"This," returned Howard, "is a dream of youth:
Your fancy soon will sink to sober truth.
I grant you, Pleasure may be fickle — vain —
Yet still there is enjoyment with the pain;

But in Ambition there is nought to bless,
Oft aspirations bring alone distress;
The goal is seldom reached: or, if we win,
There's less of pleasure, may-be more of sin.
In this, our modern Babel, you will find
Ambition's food, and charms of every kind:
Here is the Scylla of Ambition's wile;
Here the Charybdis of a wanton's smile.
You, Mordaunt, may shun both: dost thou not know
That only cowards flee the threatened blow?
The hardy mariner unfurls the sail
In stormy seas, as in a prosperous gale:
The wind may whistle, yet where'er he roam,
He feels his little bark is still his home;
Nor spurns it, though the tempests sometimes sweep,
And mightier vessels sink into the deep.
You must not shun the world, because in life
Is folly, anguish, misery and strife.
But, come to-night, and let me show you more
Of this vast city than you've seen before;
You never need again these scenes re-view,
Lost is the charm when they're no longer new."

Thus hopes may flee, and souls be lost—for what?
Man's resolution wavers from "will not";
Although experience will sadly tell,
That man's first waver is the threshold of his hell.

Mordaunt consented—it were vain to trace
What vice, what folly reigned in every place:
How first they went to view life's mimic stage,
See what men call "the manners of the age."

The object were not bad, if we could view
 The colours varied, yet distinct their hue:
 The stage might then reform and teach the times,
 And not, as now, be but the school for crimes.
 And shall our Shakspeare pass unnoticed here,
 Whose name each true-born Briton must revere?
 Schooled in the heart, each varied passion drew,
Man as he is, he placed before our view:
 Great in *description*, but oh! greater still
 In praising virtue and in censuring ill;
 He draws the tear, and makes the bosom heave,
 Truly paints vice, and makes the vicious grieve:
 The colours oft may be too bold; but then
 He paints not angels, but he shows us men.

Some few there are who show this life within:
 While Rowe's great genius draws the tear for sin,
 Jonson may make us smile; and Otway's pen
 Show us alone the baser side of men;
 Yet even Otway's low licentious talk, [wa]ll
 Though plaintive vice through Rowe's sad scenes may
 There is at least one palliative, though small,
 There genius writes, though it were vicious all.

But what the stage in these "degenerate days"?
 Vice meets no censure, Virtue gains no praise:
 Though sometimes Genius writes, he writes in vain;
 The audience nod—then sneer—then nod again.
 The mountebank—the pantomime—the dance,
 Show how the tastes of Englishmen advance:
 Now nursery rhymers wear the honoured bays;
 Men prate of Shakspeare, yet they *damn* his plays:

Unlike their forefathers, men love the best
The ribald laughter, the licentious jest:
And they who fall asleep o'er Shakspeare's page,
Talk most about "the manners of the age".

And what could Mordaunt learn in scenes like these?
Their teaching could not profit—did not please.
They left the theatre—I will not trace
Their midnight wanderings from place to place:
Nor need I tell how they the night prolong
By miscalled pleasure, by licentious song;
Nor will I paint the Syren's hell-fraught smile
The thrilling touch, the accents that beguile:
The night was passed in sin; the morning rose,
And then our wanderers first sought repose.

Repose—call you it rest, like this to lie,
Gazing in slumber on futurity?
Not a blest vision of redeeming love,
Like that which wafted Stephen's soul above,
But dreams of danger—misery—despair—
A foretaste of what some will after share.

Now Mordaunt slumbered—do not call it *sleep*:
He felt a serpent round his body creep;
The beauteous folds might well attract his eyes,
He feels the danger near: his agonising cries
Tell that his slumber has been fearful strife:
The visionary serpent stung him into life.

And what his thoughts on waking? Did that start
Bring no remorse—no anguish to his heart?

"Ah yes," thought he, "thus pleasure will entwine
Around the heart, and thus 'tis wound round mine;
Its colours too attractive to the sight,
Awhile it gives the finite sense delight;
But soon it stings, and its envenomed breath
Not starting wakes us; for that sting is death."

While danger lasts, hearts will some sorrow feel:
With ills around, men for protection kneel.
'Tis thus we see the timid soul will cower,
When lightning flashes and dark tempests lower:
He prays for mercy while the dangers last;
Forgets the Saviour when the storm is past.
When Mordaunt rose, his terror was subdued,
And in the evening were those scenes renewed;
Passion had once on Reason's barrier trod:
Then what cared he how far removed from God?

Pleasure begets satiety; and now
Dejection sat on Edward Mordaunt's brow;
A month had passed since first these joys he wooed:
The charm was gone; excitement was renewed:
For pleasure, at the best, is but a toy
Which children one day prize, the next destroy.

Weeks had passed on—o'er Edward Mordaunt's soul
The billows of tumultuous pleasure roll;
That heart grown callous, and that eye more cold,
Men in that flushing cheek his gaiety behold.
Strange, that thus man will his damnation drink,
And in repeated guilt his soul will sink;
Strange, that he cannot check his course of sin;
But on he hurries if he once begin.

Yet 'tis too true: as he who on the verge
Of some o'erhanging peak will gaze upon the surge,
O let him not upon the summit pause,
Oppose his finite sense to Nature's laws;
His brain bewildered—senses lulled asleep—
He gazes—totters, and falls headlong in the deep.

Soon Mordaunt's letters had less frequent grown;
For there were feelings which he dared not own:
He spoke less of himself and of his views,
And of the path which he through life would choose.
His thoughts of home seemed almost cast aside;
His letters seldom, and their subjects wide.
His cousin Mary wondered why her name
Was scarcely mentioned when the letters came.
Had he forgot they had together roved,
And, she had almost thought, together loved?
Had he forgot that smile of love and youth,
That smile so fraught with innocence and truth?
He scarcely could forget: but yet the soul
Leaves thoughts like these; guilt will pervade the whole.
Her name was sunk in Dissipation's stream,
And Mordaunt's love seemed now a boyish dream.

There is one vice to which we cling the more,
When pleasure satiates and delights are o'er,
We hug it closely as an object dear,
Although it brings mistrust, distaste and fear.
It is that mad ambition we behold
In him who seeks to win another's gold;
Restless, if fortune should oppose his will,
Or, if they coincide, he's restless still.

Mordaunt, ere many weeks had passed, could tell
The exciting pleasures of a London "hell."
The habit soon was rooted in the core:—
Thus, as the murderer sees his victim's gore
Rising in judgment, ages perhaps flown by,
The dreadful scene still present to his eye,
He cannot, by an effort of the will,
Drive blood away—*there is the victim still.*
So is enwoven with the gamester's heart
The mad excitement, till of self 'tis part:
'Tis in his thoughts wherever he may roam,
The dice his treasure, and the "hell" his home.

O that the conscience, when it warns in time,
And tells the fearful doom awaiting crime:
When first it whispers, "Seek the only path,"
Or, when it thunders, "Fear the God of wrath;"
O that its voice were heard, before the grave
Proclaims its warnings are too late to save!

Howard would view his friend, and oft reflect,
"Here is the noble bark which I have wrecked;
Unfit to buffet the fierce waves of strife,
Or shun the shoals of a voluptuous life.
And now, unmindful of the stormy breeze,
He still sails onwards on the dangerous seas;
And little thinks he, that he soon may be
Launched on the ocean of eternity."

Man may not perish by th' Almighty's blast,
Nor see God's terrors as in ages past:
Do lightnings dart t'arrest a single germ?
Or falls the avalanche to crush the worm?

It needs no thunder, no destroying shower,
 No mighty earthquake, no unusual power
 To punish man: let God withdraw His grace,
 And the worst judgment — the heart's vacant place.
 There is no cry, no agonising groan,
 Which issues from the bosom's burning throne,
 Fearful as this : — "*Now I am left alone.*" }

Was then this aid withdrawn, that Mordaunt's mind
 Seemed unto all through mad excitement blind?
 That he should tread the path where sinners trod,
 Revel in pleasure, and forget his God?
 The Spirit will not always strive, Mankind
 May quench the strivings of th' Eternal mind:
 Too long immersed in sensual delight,
 Had Mordaunt's vices quenched that heavenly light?
 It might be so. Forgotten now the prayer
 For that high guidance, that Almighty care:
 And now his appetite for pleasure cloyed,
 Both heart and brain were a chaotic void.

When man would level doctrine to his sense,
 And trust to Reason for his faith's defence;
 When he would dare to scan those hidden things,
 And solve the mysteries of the "King of kings,"
 No wonder that he falls. 'Tis not for man
 To thread the mazes of th' Almighty's plan:
 If revelation were to reason clear,
 There were no need of aught but reason here;
 But shall weak man dare question what is good,
 Because it cannot *all* be understood?
 What need of faith, if reason showed mankind
 The wondrous mysteries of th' Eternal mind?

Pleasure brings first misgiving to the heart,
Men's reason soon will greater doubts impart:
Mordaunt reflected—"Why a future fate,
When pleasure's woven with our present state;
When they alike who sin and they who pray,
May each enjoy what soon will pass away?
If Heaven ordains that man shall perish—why
Are some exalted to that unknown sky?
Or why should not Jehovah's mighty will
Crush into atoms *all*, for *all* do ill?
What can man add to the Eternal fame?
Then is not praise from good and ill the same?
What can man take from such a Being's might,
Who sits enthroned on everlasting light?
What can He care, to whom archangels bow,
What men refuse to hear or what avow?
When mountains are removed at His nod,
Earth's entrails tremble at the will of God,
What can it matter, though with trembling awe,
Men wait His judgments or despise His law?
If man can add no glory, nor detract,
Why should He follow not the smoothest track?
If the Almighty wills mankind to save,
'Tis not because this precious boon we crave?
Salvation thus depends not upon man,
For all is settled in th' Eternal plan.
Then let me live and be my only care,
Or to shun madness or avoid despair."

And this is human intellect, and here
Men dare to question who should only fear.
And this is human reason, boasted worth,
■ *The pride of men, and to the devils mirth.*

And know ye not, that e'en your vital breath
Draws in the element of after-death?
That though your intellect to heaven aspire,
There's fearful judgment in air's hidden fire:
It wants alone the Eternal Monarch's voice
To make men wail at what they now rejoice.*

Bad will bring worse: 'tis thus we see in youth
The strong desire to falsify the truth:
'Tis the first step to crimes of deeper dye,
And manhood's vice may spring from boyhood's lie.
So with man's reason: he will doubt awhile
That God can visit any with his smile;
His attributes he questions and his laws,
And then at last denies the "Great First Cause."†

Pleasure and bad associates had wrought
In Mordaunt's mind such sad misguided thought:
Not long before, and he with horror viewed
The path he now so eagerly pursued.
Radiant with hope and panting with desires,
Such as the love of good alone inspires:
Once youthful ardour beaming in his face;
Yet, ah! how soon had vanished every trace!
Now, like a willow, would he hang his head,
A drooping form, and in his spirit dead.
The love of home and of a parent's smile
But little now would Mordaunt's thoughts beguile;

* It is indeed an awful reflection, that what is *now* essential to our being contains that element which may be our *hereafter*—
"the fire which never shall be quenched."

† "Thou Great First Cause, least understood."—*Pope*.

Or e'en that love which man to woman owes,
When friendship joins the stream where passion flows:
That dear affection, fitted to outlive
Each other joy this transient world can give.
Religion—that was numbered with the past,
Uprooted like a tree by Afric's blast;
No traces left of what was late so fair,
The verdure gone—all was a desert there.

'Tis strange that man can live, and dare to think
Danger removed, while verging on its brink;
Though Mordaunt's state filled Howard's soul with awe,
Because he openly denied God's law;
Yet Howard deemed, that he at least could share
The self-same dangers, yet escape the snare.
He deemed himself secure: no words deny,
Though works offend, the Ruler of the sky.
And oh how many who, abashed, will shrink
From the word poison, of the cup will drink.
An atheist!—Why start we at the word?
Why sink our hearts within us when 'tis heard?
That man should dare his Maker to deny,
Despise the Almighty, and his God defy;
This fills mankind, and well it may, with dread,
And calls down vengeance on the guilty head.
But yet the man who shudders at the name,
With equal madness if with more of shame,
Will cavil in his heart; and that recess
Would be ere long a pathless wilderness.
His principles, his actions are the same,
Though he is awe-struck at the sceptic's name:

An atheist in his heart — yet knows not how
His heart denies his God, although his lips avow.
'Tis thus the sceptic's icy heart will sadden;
And thus his brain, excitement gone, will madden;
Thus, like the lightning's flash upon the oak,
'Tis stripped in fragments ere is seen the stroke.
Yet Mordaunt still would seek his thoughts to drown,
Conscience to stifle in the din of "town";
The gamester's vice his greatest pleasure here;
The love of God forgot; unknown the fear.
Lo, he who late had sought in earnest prayer,
Th' eternal guidance and the heavenly care,
Forgot, nay more, denied the Almighty power;
His sole desire t' enjoy the present hour.

Mark yon proud building: was it built for fame,
That thus it boasts an almost royal name?
Is it intended for that converse sweet,
That social feeling when acquaintance meet;
It stands alone, a monument of art:
Does it improve mankind, and teach the heart?
Nay, does it e'en refine the sense, and show
Manners, at least, from intercourse may grow?
Ah, no: it stands, that man may pass the night,
Glutting on sin with devil's appetite.
'Twas built for vice: and this its high renown,
To deaden sense, demoralise the town,
That there, ere sickness wake them from their dream,
Nobles may gamble, statesmen may blaspheme:
Yet could they turn where sin will thus enthrall,
See as of old the writing on the wall,

And, like Belshazzar, view their judgment near,
Where then their pleasure, and what then their fear?*

View yon old man who totters to his sin;
His time-cracked voice scarce heard among the din!
Like to some pilot in his ship asleep,
While winds are howling, and loud yawns the deep.
Hark! from those lips what execrations flow!
They lately prated of a nation's woe.
O stay a moment, legislator, pause:
Shall worm like you despise your Maker's laws?
Is judgment such as yours to rule the state?
Or vice like yours to weave the web of fate?
No wonder then, a mist comes o'er the mind,
That without virtue, intellect is blind;
That folly you should add to your neglect,
Endow the college while you spurn the sect:
Why not conclude what you so well begin?
Punish *each* sinner, propagate *each* sin,
Draw on your fellow to a flaming pit,
See fire consume him — then display thy wit:
Laugh, sneer, deride, revile him, if you will:
But mark — the deed is thine, and there is judgment still.

Can we then wonder though a nation cry,
And lift its voice aloud in agony?
Though direful famine stalk throughout the land,
Or War intestine lift his blood-red hand?

* It is sufficient proof of the pernicious effects of these establishments, that the *noble* frequenters should be found not only to defraud one another, but should also endeavour to cheat the proprietors under a plea of which they should be the last to avail themselves. This is not, I trust, the general practice, but it would be easy to point to a notorious instance.

How can we wonder if our produce fail —
 Evil beset us, misery assail ?
 Though mothers clasp their infants to their breast,
 And cry aloud for death to give them rest ?
 Though Darkness cover with his pitchy pall,
 Or Terror's firebrand strike the breasts of all ?

Mordaunt had often met, within that place,
 The man who was the cause of his disgrace.
 His college foe was passed unnoticed by ;
 Nor each vouchsafed to question or reply :
 But on this night, while Mammon held the trap,
 Resentment fled, and Lucre filled the gap.
 Mordaunt had largely won the night before ;
 And Treasures soften e'en a foeman's core.

They spoke, they played, dispute ere long grew high,
 Mordaunt, in passion, gave my lord " the lie."
 In rage they parted ; Mordaunt sought his rest
 With body wearied and with mind distress.

Next morn a stranger called ; 'twas quickly shown
 Blood must be shed the insult to atone :
 No time for thought, resentment might be o'er
 But now 'tis *honour*, though 'twas hate before.
Honour — in blood congealed to take a life,
 Which had been murder in the heat of strife !
Honour — when its result we dare not tell !
Honour — to plunge a fellow's soul to Hell !
Honour — to stand and be a murderer's mark,
 To hurl defiance e'en with life's last spark ;
 To dare that law which has for ages stood —
 " He dies by man who sheds a brother's blood" !

Oh, in that moment when we all shall stand
Waiting the judgment of the Almighty hand,
Will, then, this *honour* palliate the crime,
And Heaven's high Monarch hear the plea of time?
Stript of those robes which make it honour here,
Before that throne the murder will appear;
Disrobed of ornament, the sin is *there*;
The crime is Cain's; why not his judgment share —
An outcast on the Earth; and in the Heaven,
O God can crimes like these be there forgiven?

It was the eve before the fatal morn;
And Mordaunt sat dejected and forlorn:
Howard in vain tried to dispel the gloom —
All was the lifeless silence of the tomb.
Mordaunt, too proud to agitation show,
Although too conscious of th' impending blow,
He could not help reflecting that he late
Was looking forward to a nobler fate;
That he had hoped with noblest men to vie,
And little thought that he in shame might die.
He trusted in himself — how vain the hope,
For man, unaided, with his sin to cope!
And now to Mordaunt's mind were brought before
Those peaceful scenes he thought to view no more;
Those looks of love, that welcome with a smile;
He heard those tales which often would beguile;
Then like to felons with their lives at stake,
Who dream of peace and then to horror wake,
From his fond reverie Edward Mordaunt started;
Still deeper anguish had those thoughts imparted.
The dream was changed — he saw each happy face
Robbed of those smiles which time could not efface;

He saw his weeping mother standing there,
And heard her sobs and listened to her prayer —
“ O God, have mercy: look upon my son !”
She could not murmur, “ May thy will be done.”
He saw his brother at the altar stand;
And Sinai's law he held within his hand.
And though he heard, “ Thou shalt not kill,” with awe;
He asked not God to make him keep that law.
He saw the weeping form of Mary now,
A death-like pallor overspread her brow;
He saw that form now robbed of all its bloom,
Wan and dejected, hastening to the tomb:
That eye which late had lighted up the whole,
Told with unearthly light of a departing soul.
He saw the roses from her cheeks were fled,
The hectic flush of fever overspread;
He saw her on her bed of sickness lie;
He saw her daily droop, and fade, and die.

And did no gleam of a preserving power
Glance on his soul in that dejected hour?
Were there no thoughts of that great God, who gave
The life which He and He alone could save?
Could he who late would scoff at and deny,
Now supplicate the Ruler of the sky?
Ah no: the thought once rose within his breast,
“ Is there a God?” but could the thought give rest?
The thought was madness: if there was a God,
That he denied Him and with sinners trod;
He dared not think to-morrow he might be
Waiting his sentence for Eternity.—

O Fashion, wherefore always mar the earth?
Is this a time for folly, or for mirth?
Is it a time when man prepares for death,
To worship thee e'en with his latest breath?
Is it a time when man would strike the blow,
To be the votary of heartless show?
Yet see the opponents to each other bend,
That you might almost deem the foe the friend.
The world's hypocrisy will thus beguile,
And take a brother's life-blood with a smile.

O God, that thus two fellow-mortals stand;
And impious dare the vengeance of Thine hand!
That each should quench the warning voice within,
When each may hurry to Thy sight in sin!
A moment more, and one or both may be
Waiting—but not with hope—eternity.

The ground is measured, and the friends retire;
The signal given—they together *fire*.
O God! both fall: yet hark that parting groan!
Another soul has sought the world unknown:
The unerring ball had reached the seat of life,
And in one moment ended all the strife.
Mordaunt was yet alive; but from his side
Was swiftly flowing the ensanguined tide.
Yet, oh, how fearfully those eye-balls roll;
Convulsive gasps his agonised soul:
Stricken he lies, and weltering in his gore;
Lo, he may pray for mercy now no more.
E'en for his sins there now may be no moan;
His soul seems issuing in each agonising groan.

Ambition gone, and even pleasure fled—
 See Mordaunt senseless laid upon his bed:
 And scarcely did he deem that life was there,
 As o'er him Howard bent and breathed a prayer.
 (When man cannot dejection chase away,
 Though prayerless else, he then will try to pray.)
 And then reflection came; and Howard thought
 Upon the work of evil he had wrought:
 That his persuasions had induced his friend
 Those means to follow, of which this the end.
 For the wide waters he had left the ark;
 Though *there* was light and all around was dark.
 He left those joys which he could not replace,
 And sought, but did not find, a resting-place:
 He found no verdant spot, no hopeful shore,
 Though to the ark of peace he did return no more.

'Tis sad to see a fellow-mortal lie,
 Verging on nature's last extremity.
 'Tis sad to listen to each pain-fraught tone;
 To hear each sigh, and witness every moan.
 But, oh, what more than sadness 'tis to know,
 That we have hastened the grim tyrant's blow;
 That we have blighted thus a tree so fair,
 And for spring blossoms left a winter there,
 Accelerated death, and brought with death despair!

So Howard thought, as thus he bent to gaze:
 "To me unknown he had seen happier days;
 In peace had lived, in peace had been his death,
 Not as a murderer resigned his breath:"
 "O may we live!" was Howard's cry to heaven;
 "Or if he die, to me be death forgiven!"

There seemed a dreadful weight upon his breast,
Which would for ever banish from it rest.
He did not do the deed; but yet he felt
The cause of misery with him had dwelt:
Not from his hand was sent the deadly shaft,
Nor had he held the cup which he had quaffed:
But who prepared the bow, the arrow fixed;
And who the poison in the cup had mixed?
His conscience told him he had sown the seed;
And this the produce of his fatal deed;
Cowed was that soul which ne'er had known a fear,
And from the Stoic heart gushed forth the bitter tear.

Behold him watching, by that flickering light,
That dying form through the long gloomy night:
How did he gaze upon that face so pale,
Those starting eyes, which told so sad a tale?
How could he hear the sinner's dying cry,
And listen to the murderer's agony?
He seemed one moment chasing round the room
The victim who through him had met his doom.
Anon he was upon a dreadful steep,
And plunged his victim headlong in the deep:
And then he saw him clinging to a raft;
He saw him sink—and then the murderer laughed.
'Tis sad such visions should float o'er the brain,
The mind be wakened by the body's pain;
That thus the past should as the present seem,
And all be life-like in delirium's dream.

There is a solitude more sad than grief,
When the mind's torpor will not seek relief.

More sad than evils which may wrack and tear,
Yet leave not such a chilling winter there;
To sit alone and watch a much-loved friend,
In drear unconsciousness approach his end;
To watch alone the one that we have loved,
Whom long long years of trial nobly proved,
See those loved eyes cast an unmeaning glare,
And looks of love changed for that vacant stare,
See the soul sink unconscious in the grave,
And know that we have not the power to save;
To commune with the dying, yet no word
Escape the lips, but choking sobs are heard:
'Tis then we feel both joy and grief have flown;
And oh how sad like this to be alone!

Yet e'en in this most lonely speck of time,
The heart has some relief unknown to crime,
Can view the dying, can behold the dead,
Watch the poor sufferer when the mind is fled;
And though he watches with a soul subdued,
And feels how sad, how drear this solitude,
Yet he for better things life's path has trod;
And in this hour can commune with his God:
'Tis then he feels, there is a comfort left,
Though of the transient joys of time bereft;
'Tis then he feels, though other charms are flown,
The heart is sad, yet is not *all* alone.

Howard knew not this solace: you might trace
The gloom which time might lighten, not efface.
He had not known that comfort which, in grief,
Will consolation bring, if not relief:

He had not known religion will bring peace
When all the glories of the world shall cease.
There lay the one he loved but to enslave:
He could not see him sinking in the grave.

Morn came at last, and, with it, Mordaunt's friends:
A weeping mother at his couch attends;
A brother there, and more than sister too,
Gaze upon Mordaunt; and how sad the view!
How wild that look! is madness in the brain?
Or is't the agony of maddening pain?
How fixed those eyes! will those convulsive throes
Wrack that wan form until its being close?
How pale those lips! will they ne'er move again?
Or until death will they death-like remain?
Will nought escape them, save that fearful cry
Until the body moulder and the spirit fly?

Where then was Howard? He was gone—yet where?
He could not in the desolation share.
He left: and none could tell where he had fled;
If yet alive or numbered with the dead.
He could not stay to see how grief had worn
Those sorrowing friends—morn came: and he was gone.

Hush! that look changes: will he yet revive?
Hark to the murmur, that "he still may live."
E'en to the last we find will hope deceive;
And man finds comfort when he most should grieve.
He wakes to life: but, ah! how soon that breath
Falters its accents, and will end in death.

Oh what is it, with such appalling power,
Makes death so dreadful in this dying hour?
That he forgets the friends who weeping stand,
And shrinks so fearfully from death's cold hand?

Men doubt not long there is a power above;
Though they despise the working of His love:
Let them but feel decay around them creep,
And death be near them—is then fear asleep?
Think you that they who cavil for an hour,
With danger round them, do not quake and cower?
Think you those spirits that have walked the earth,
To jest at heaven and make their God their mirth,
When death was near them, could they then disemble?
Ah no: they then had faith enough to tremble.
Think you there was no anguish, though no prayer
Came from the dying lips of a Voltaire?
Though Gibbon doubted, and though Hume would sneer,
Was it *all* doubting when their death was near?
The sceptic Shelley, with the sickly form,
Had he no fears of the impending storm?
Though poor weak man may almost doubt awhile
Yet, on his death-bed, do these thoughts beguile?
Conscience then thunders that there is a God;
That death alone waits the Almighty's nod;
No wonder, then, that Mordaunt shrunk from death,
When to the God denied he would resign his breath.

His prayers avail not for a respite now;
The hand of death is laid upon his brow.

With one wild cry he 's in his Maker's sight,
There to be judged by Him who judges right;
And could we hear the eternal sentence there,
If heaven or hell the doom—the lesson still — PREPARE !

THE END.



